


# ONTARIO BIRDS



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## Ontario Birds

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Material should be double-spaced and typewritten if possible. All submissions are subject to review and editing. Camera-ready galley proofs will be sent to authors only if specifically requested on submission.

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## Editorial Policy

*Ontario Birds* is the journal of the Ontario Field Ornithologists. Its aim is to provide a vehicle for the documentation of the birds of Ontario. We encourage the submission of full length articles or short notes on the status of bird species in Ontario, significant provincial or county distributional records, tips on bird identification, behavioural observations of birds in Ontario, location guides to significant birdwatching areas in Ontario, book reviews, and similar

material of interest on Ontario birds. We do not accept submissions dealing with "listing" and we discourage Seasonal Reports of bird sightings as these are covered by *Bird Finding in Canada* and *American Birds*, respectively. Distributional records of species for which the Ontario Bird Records Committee (OBRC) requires documentation must be accepted by them before they can be published in *Ontario Birds*.

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## Letters to the Editor

### **Pine Grosbeaks at feeders re-visited**

I found Ron Pittaway's article (*Ontario Birds* 7:65-67), describing the use of bird feeders by Pine Grosbeaks in central Ontario as unusual and recent in origin, to be in agreement with my 20 years of experience in feeding and observing birds in the area. It was therefore somewhat perplexing to read accounts by Bill Walker and Erica Dunn (*Ontario Birds* 7:86 and 87-91, respectively) which seemed to indicate far more use of feeders by Pine Grosbeaks than either Pittaway or I have observed.

It may be that factors such as the lack of natural food, the habitat surrounding a feeder, and the type of food provided make some sites (such as Walker's yard) particularly attractive to Pine Grosbeaks.

However, I wonder whether Dunn and Pittaway were using the same definition of "feeder use". The Ontario Bird Feeder Survey cited by Dunn (*American Birds* 40:61-66) involved observers counting "each species seen in the immediate vicinity of their feeders". I suspect that there is a natural tendency for survey participants to attempt to maximize their counts of the number of species coming to their feeders — which would lead to counting Pine Grosbeaks that (for instance) only perched near feeders or took seeds that had fallen on the ground below a feeder. This type of counting would

tend to inflate the apparent "use of feeders" by this species. In contrast, Pittaway was describing Pine Grosbeaks actually landing on feeding structures and eating.

In presenting these comments, my only intention is to make sure that we are all talking about the same thing. For now, I still believe that the widespread direct use of feeding structures by Pine Grosbeaks in central Ontario is unusual and recent in origin.

R.G. Tozer  
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